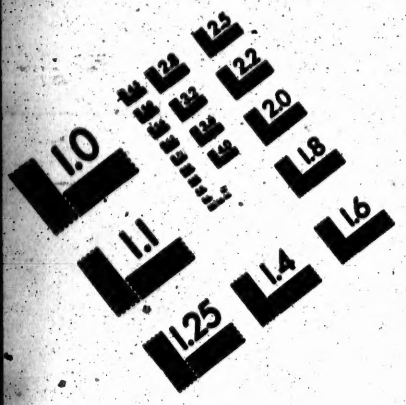

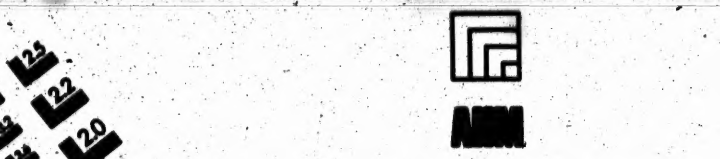

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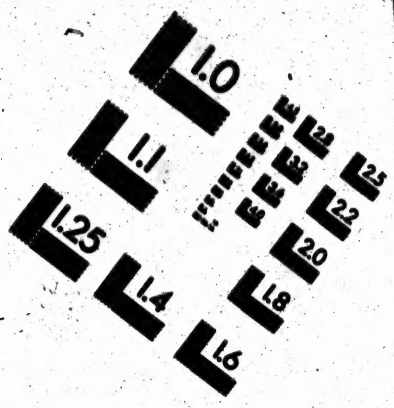

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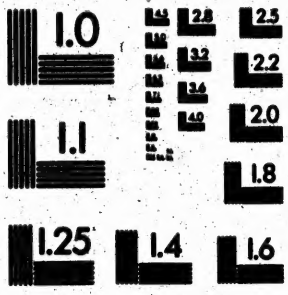

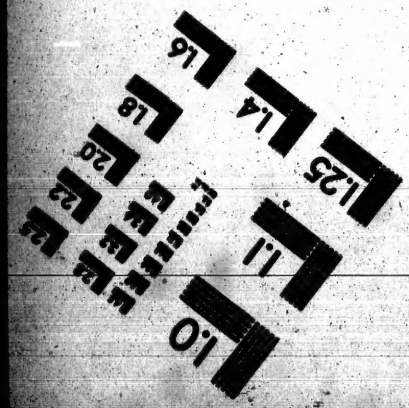

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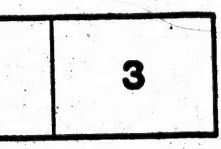

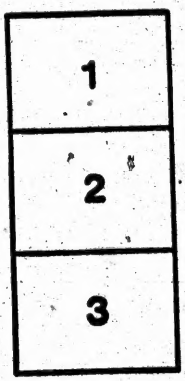

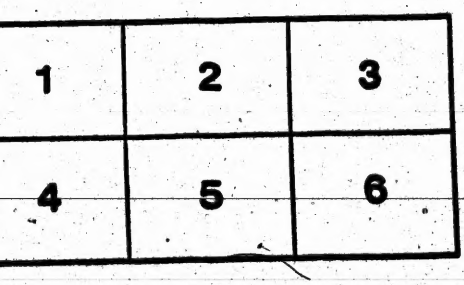

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FROM

THE LIPS OF JESUS:

CONTAINING

Cautions, Counsels and Consolations

FOR

SUCH OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST AS ARE SEEKING TO BE LIKE THEIR LORD.

BY

REV. DANIEL WISE,

AUTHOR OF "THE PATH OF LIFE," "YOUNG MAN'S COUNSELLOR," "YOUNG LADY'S COUNSELLOR," ETC.

This is my beloved Son, hear ye him. — JEHOVAH.

Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. — CHRIST.

EIGHTH THOUSAND.

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TO

MY ESTEEMED FRIEND,

NATHAN B. HALL,

OF PROVIDENCE;

AND TO ALL, OF EVERY SECT, WHO LOVE THE WORDS OF JESUS,

This Work

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.

Bennington, June, 1854. DANIEL WISE.

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I. Blessedness of the Fruitful Disciple.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples."

THERE is an old legend of the mediæval age, which will beautifully illustrate these words of Jesus. It states that, as a pious monk kneeled in his narrow cell, earnestly praying for a vision of his Redeemer, a great light suddenly illuminated the place of his devotion. In the midst of this strange splendor he beheld the presence of his Saviour. With rapturous awe he contemplated the sublime vision, his heart swelling with ineffable joy. But, just at that moment, the convent-bell rung to summon him to his accustomed duty of distributing alms to the poor at the convent-gate. For an instant he hesitated. The celestial mani-

festation charmed his soul and afforded him exquisite delight, while the clanging bell called him to a mere earthly duty. The former might never be vouchsafed to him again; the latter he could perform at any time. What should he do? His heart, filled with true charity, bade him hasten to the convent-gate. He obeyed its promptings, departed to distribute the wonted alms; and, then returning to his cell, he found, to his inexpressible gratification, that the vision still remained in all its brightness and beauty. As he bowed before it, with a stream of gratitude gushing from his heart, the Saviour spoke, and said, "Hadst thou stayed, I had not remained"!

Now this, to be sure, is only a legend; but it may serve to impress thee, fellow-Christian, with the truth, that God is more honored by thy *deeds* than by thy *emotions*. Doubtless, as in the vision, the ardent raptures of admiring love, the eagle glances of a bliss-imparting faith into the glorious mysteries of the beatific presence, are pleas-

ing to your heavenly Father. He greatly loves to behold such exercises; but he loves much more to see you bear "much fruit." Your joyful emotions are as the blossoms on a tree in spring; your works are as the golden fruit it bears in autumn. Both are desirable; both are necessary. But the former is valuable only as they are the pledge of the latter. And, however beautiful the blossoms may be, they are deemed worthless if they prove unfruitful. Even so does God estimate the value of your feelings and your actions. As saith your Saviour, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

The "*much fruit*" expected of thee, O Christian, includes the subjection of your body, with all its senses and appetites, to the law of God; the proper regulation and control of your desires, passions and affections; the consecration of your intellect, and the submission of your will to do, and to suffer, all the will of God. It supposes that, having conquered yourself and sur-

rendered your affections to Christ, you spend your strength, your talents, your wealth, your time, in vigorous endeavors to build up the kingdom of Christ, and in works of charity. These are the fruits which, when manifested in your life, demonstrate the existence and power of a divine life within you, and lead men to glorify your heavenly Father, from whose gracious energy they proceed.

These fruits bear the same relation to your religious feelings as, in the legend, the alms-giving of the monk bore to the presence of the vision. Withhold these fruits, be as the tree having leaves but no figs, and your emotions will dry up. But bear fruit, "much fruit," be "a fruitful bough whose branches run over the wall," bearing rich clusters of precious grapes, and your soul will taste the thrilling ecstasies of holy love, the calm of the peace "which passeth all understanding," and the tumultuous swellings of joyful tides of inborn bliss. For, having glorified your

Father in heaven, by your "much fruit," he will take up his abode with you, and his spirit shall be in you as a well of water springing up unto eternal life.

Say, then, fellow-Christian, art thou bearing much fruit? Do those who know thee best, see in thee such a benevolence towards the souls and bodies of men; such consistency of life; such fidelity to the church; such heavenly-mindedness; such deadness to the present life; such an unlikeness to thy former self, and such a likeness to Christ, that they are compelled to confess God is with thee of a truth? If so, rejoice, but not in thyself; be glad, but let thy gladness be in Christ, who is thy life. Be earnest, also, not only to remain fruitful, but even to bring forth more fruit.

But if thou art a barren tree, a reproach to the church, a by-word for thine inconsistencies in the lips of many, beware! The fate of the unfruitful branch is to wither, to be cut off, to be burned! Fearful des-

tiny! O, view it well, and shudder, and repent, and become the bearer of much fruit! And this the more, because the time is short. As saith the poet —

"Whether we smile or weep,
Time wings his flight;
Days, hours, they never creep, —
Life speeds like light.

"Whether we chafe or chide,
On is Time's pace;
Never his noiseless step
Doth he retrace.

"Dare not, then, waste thy days,
Reckless and proud;
Lest, while ye dream not,
Time spread thy shroud."

2. Christ's Solemn Command.

"Son! go work to-day in my vineyard."

These are solemn words. They express the affection of the father, and the authority of the sovereign. They imply a duty, for the neglect of which no excuse will be deemed sufficient, no dispensation

granted. There is no alternative between doing the Master's work or suffering his displeasure. Do you inquire, Christian, *what* you are expected to do? *Which* is your field of labor? *When* you are to enter it? *How long* you are to toil? Let me reply to these questions through a fact from the history of a man of the world.

A gentleman, named QUATREMER DISJONVAL, was once thrown into a dungeon in the city of Utrecht. Without a companion, without books, what could he do in his solitary prison? Apparently nothing. But unwilling to be idle, even there, he gave himself to the careful study of the habits of a spider, which had spun its web within his cell. He soon found himself able to predict changes in the weather from its movements, — a trifling discovery, but yet vastly useful to him in the issue. For the next winter a French army invaded Holland, and was in the full tide of victory, when a sudden thaw stopped its progress, and led its chiefs to resolve upon a retreat.

But the prisoner, who had learned its movements from his jailer, and who, from the conduct of his spider, judged that severe frost would soon return, contrived to inform the French of his opinion. They put faith in his judgment, and maintained their ground. The frost soon returned, as he predicted. The victorious French completed their conquest. Disjonval was set at liberty.

In this fact, we see a man *doing all that was possible to his powers under his circumstances.* It was a little thing he did, but it had mighty sequences. It determined the issue of a war and gave him his freedom. And what does Christ require of thee, O Christian, but to do always what may be possible, under your circumstances, to diminish the amount of human sin and sorrow, and to increase human purity and happiness? A smile, a word, a tear, a gift, a prayer, or a sermon, may be the thing required, according to your ability and opportunity. Every moment is the

time; every place the sphere of your labors; every human being who comes within reach of your influence the subject for you to act upon. The duty to be done may appear trifling in itself, or it may seem weighty and serious; but, if done aright, it will be fraught with mighty consequences. Remember, a virtuous act is never lost, even as no action terminates in the cause which gives it birth.

Go, then, Christian, in the spirit of this command, and do "whatsoever thine hand findeth to do." Seek thy work, and it will come to thee. Perform it well, and it shall remain to thy praise forever. If thou seest its fruit, rejoice; if thou seest it not, continue, nevertheless, to labor.

The child, who sows flower-seeds in his garden at night, is apt to weep in the morning if the expected flowers do not appear. It is well if he do not impatiently destroy his first labor, by raking up the seeds, to see if they have sprouted. With a spirit very similar to this, do many Christ-

tians labor for God. With zeal they sow the seed; but when the fruit delays its coming, with child-like impatience they fret, and pronounce their labor lost.

This is not only childish conduct, it is worse; it betrays an undisciplined spirit, an unsanctified will, and an impatience unworthy of a disciple of Christ. It savors not a little of selfish vanity, which yearns to feed itself on the proofs of its power to accomplish moral results. It indicates that earthly aims are mixed with his religious labors; otherwise the mind would find its reward in the consciousness of duty done; of God's approval. It would not fret itself because the seed delayed to show its shoots above the soil.

As a man of faith, you must learn to wait as well as to labor. You must comprehend that it is your mission to sow, to plant, and to water These things done, you must be satisfied to wait, knowing that the tardiness of the seed to throw out its shoots is not always a proof that its vitality

is lost — that a moral harvest is often reaped a long time after it is sown — frequently after its sower has gone to his long home. Therefore, wait in hope!

A boy once shot an arrow in the air. So lofty was its flight, that he lost sight of it in the clouds, and failed to detect the place of its descent. Long time he searched in vain around the meadow, and, at last, went home mourning the loss of his arrow. Years passed away. The boy became a man. After many wanderings, he revisited the haunts of his boyhood. Walking around the meadow, he gazed upon a venerable oak, whose wide-spreading branches had frequently sheltered him, in his boyhood, from the rays of the sultry sun. Full of old memories, he paused until his eye rested upon a feather, which protruded from a hollow in the tree. He drew it forth, and with it the identical arrow which years before he mourned as lost!

And is it not thus with the efforts of God's children? They speak in the ears

of sinners, they bestow a tract, they utter an exhortation, or, if in the ministry, preach a sermon. They strive to watch the flight of their shaft. Vain endeavor! They cannot track it, as it enters the mysterious regions of the mind; and they too often foolishly deem it lost. But it is not so. It has done its work; and either in the future years of time, or in eternity, that effort, like the long lost arrow, shall come back to the bosom of its owner, bringing with it a blessing, even the reward of a duty faithfully performed.

It is [illegible] Dr. Coke that, while journeying in [illegible]ca, he once attempted to ford a river; but his horse lost its foothold and was carried down the stream. The doctor narrowly escaped drowning by clinging to a bough, which overhung the river-side. A lady, in the vicinity, gave him entertainment in his distress; sent messengers after his horse; and did him much kindness. When he left her roof, he gave her a *tract!*

For five years the good doctor toiled on in the cause of God in England and America. Whether his tract had been destroyed, or had pierced a human heart, he knew not — nay, he had forgotten its gift. But one day, on his way to a Conference, a young man approached him and requested the favor of a brief conversation. "Do you remember, sir, being nearly drowned in —— river some five years ago?"

"I remember it quite well," replied the doctor.

"Do you recollect the widow lady, at whose house you were entertained, after escaping from the river?"

"I do, and never shall I forget the kindness she showed me."

"And do you also remember giving her a tract, when you bade her farewell?"

"I do not; but it is very possible I did so."

"Yes, sir, you did leave a tract. That lady read it, and was converted. She loaned it to her neighbors, and many of

them were converted too. Several of her children were also saved. A society was formed, which flourishes to this day."

This statement moved the doctor to tears. But the young man, after a brief pause, resumed, saying:

"I have not quite told you all; I am her son. That tract led me to Christ. And now, sir, I am on my way to Conference to seek admission as a travelling preacher."

Thus did the good Dr. Coke find his arrow in an unexpected hour. And thus will your shafts come back to you, Christian, in due season. Courage, therefore, drooping friend! Weep not over any apparent want of success! But as you have learned to labor, so learn also to *wait*. Only see to it, that you toil on in faith, and wait in hope. Yea,

Be thou like yon old mountain oak,
Of sturdy mien — in purpose strong,
And prove thyself to be unchanged
In every sense from right to wrong.

Let not success unbalance mind;
In adverse times be honest, then,—
Support the truth and thou shalt march,
A monarch in the van of men.

8. Lesson for an Indolent Disciple.

"Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."

Effort is the price of success in every department of human action. From the attainment of rudimental knowledge to the salvation of the soul, every progressive step is made by undaunted toil. The boy who drones over his book, a slave to listless laziness, thereby secures a place for himself at the foot of society. The man who shrinks from difficulty in his business or profession, who refuses to climb because the rock is sharp, and the way steep, must make up his mind to slide back and to lie in the shadows below, while others use him as a stepping-block for their own rising.

For this, such is the constitution of society, there is no help. The poet wrote truly, who said:

"Thou must either soonest stoop,
Fall or triumph, stand or droop;
Thou must either serve or govern;
Must be slave or must be sovereign;
Must, in fine, be block or wedge,
Must be anvil or be sledge."

And these words of Jesus teach thee this lesson, O Christian, with respect to thy salvation. Eternal life can be secured only by eager, earnest, toiling along the narrow way of duty. That way is well defined and free of access to all who sternly will to enter it. But its entrance is beset with difficulties, and all along its length are obstacles and ambushed foes, seeking to turn the fainting traveller aside. He who, like Bunyan's Timorous and Mistrust, flees from the voice of lions, is undone. He may desire to triumph; he may even make feeble and spasmodic attempts to tread the path; but unless he strive with all the energy of his nature, stimulated by the

divine influences which attend the exercise of a true faith, he will not be able to enter in. Thus hath the Master said, and thus shouldst thou believe, O disciple!

And why should you object to agonize and strive when the prize is eternal life? It is said of Tasso, the poet, that the manuscripts of his "Jerusalem Delivered" were so blotted with innumerable corrections as to be scarcely legible. Another poet, Pope, kept his works in his study from one to two years before he allowed them to be printed. Now, if, to secure all the perfection possible to their writings, these poets strove so painfully, how much more ought you to strive for the purity of your heart and the salvation of your soul!

Strive mightily, therefore, O Christian, since to shake off an indolent spirit, to stir your soul to exertion, to reach constantly upward, to struggle for a firm foothold in the most slippery places, to wrestle manfully, even when principalities and powers are your foes, to refuse submission to any

evils, however frowning, are conditions you must either fulfil, or sink to littleness, to uselessness — perchance to ruin. Therefore, with a brave heart and an unconquerable spirit, you must address yourself to the work of the day, striving with pure aims, and religious trust, for an increase of your talents, and for such a victory over sin as will enable you to stand unabashed in the last day. Striving thus, you need fear no failure. Your triumph, though delayed for a time, shall come at last. Say, then, with the poet:

"So let it be. In God's own might
We gird us for the common fight,
And strong in Him whose cause is ours,
In conflict with unholy powers,
We grasp the weapons He has given, —
The Light, the Truth, the Love of Heaven."

4. Words of cheer for Desponding Disciples.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

THERE is an island in a distant sea, from whose shores the fishermen sail in tiny crafts to procure the treasures of the deep. During their absence thick mists often descend and cover highland, cliff, and beacon, with so thick a veil, that these hardy mariners are left without a mark by which to steer their laden barks. But in these dull hours, they are not left to wander unguided on the pathless sea. When the time for their return arrives, the women of that islet — mothers, wives, sisters and daughters — descend to the shores and raise the voice of song. Borne on the quiet air, their voices soon fall sweetly on the ears of the loved ones on the sea. Guided by the well-known sounds, they steer their boats in safety to the shore.

And thus to thee, O Christian, comes the

voice of love from the celestial shore, as thou wanderest, a bewildered child of tribulation, on the misty sea of life. Hearken! *Be of good cheer!* is the cry that greets thee. It comes from Jesus, who has overcome this very world, which is the scene and source of your trials. His conquest of your adversary is the pledge of your victory. Therefore, Be of good cheer!

There is no person living who does not, at times, feel a spirit of discouragement stealing over him. As a cloud obscures the moon, as mists shroud the sunbeams, so despondency spreads a curtain before the mental eye, and everything in and about the soul assumes a dull, sombre, threatening aspect. Clouds and storms frown loweringly from above; difficulties wall up life's path; dangers, like spectral faces, with large, malignant eyes, gaze fiercely through the gloaming; and the soul, shuddering with terror, and shrinking from further conflict, longs, yet fears, to die. This spirit is not peculiar to one

class, but is common to all. It assails the weary and feeble *woman*, borne to the dust by bodily affliction, oppressed with a multitude of domestic perplexities, harassed with innumerable petty, but consuming cares; and, if she submit to it, she loses heart and hope. The sun of her life sets untimely, and she weeps away her existence in self-consuming sadness. It is equally powerful in its sway over the high-minded *merchant* and the lusty *artisan*, who, in their dark days, seem walled in by forebodings of bankruptcy, poverty, and the poor-house. It often affects *Christians*, too, and, hiding the cross from their vision, leads them to contemplate their past sins and remaining corruptions, until their redemption seems hopeless. And, more mendacious still, it stalks into the pulpit, whispers in the ear of the *minister*, insinuating that he does not enjoy the confidence of his people, that he is not appreciated, that his gifts are diminishing, and that he had better secularize himself as

speedily as possible. Thus, a despondent spirit assails all classes and professions, and no man who suffers from it, need deem himself *peculiarly* tried. As it assails him, so it assails all.

But there is a vast difference between different persons, in the degrees of power which this spirit attains over them. In some, owing to natural temperament, to the state of the health, or, more frequently, to the absence of a prompt and vigorous resistance to its influence, it gains the empire of the soul. Such persons, like the unfortunate Cowper, sink into settled melancholy. They become the victims of a morbid sensitiveness. They acquire a marvellous power to discern evil in everything; but are blind to all that is lovely and beautiful in life. Its thorns they diligently gather and hug with unnatural fondness to their pierced bosoms, fascinated, it would seem, by the ills which so cruelly lacerate them. But, on the flowers which bloom with beauty at their feet, they refuse

even to gaze. There is scarcely anything in human life, except guilt, more to be dreaded than such a state as this.

To avoid it, its incipient symptoms must be manfully resisted. To prevent its first shadows from falling darkly on the soul is impossible. Those shadows fall unbidden, suddenly, apparently without cause, and often in the midst of our most sunny hours. Even the mighty spirit of Napoleon felt them. When he stood before his pavilion, to witness his grand army cross the Niemen, on its way to Moscow — and a grave; and, after its almost innumerable battalions, with their standards floating proudly in the breeze, their helmets and bayonets glistening in the sun, had defiled in his presence, and presented to his gaze an army such as no previous commander had ever led into the field, he is said to have suddenly assumed a grave and gloomy aspect. Turning from the spectacle before him, he hummed a martial air and hastened within the imperial tent. What did this

act signify, if not that dark shadows fell on his heart, and that he inwardly trembled before some spectral evils, like a common man?

What these shadows are, and whence they come, are mysteries. Perhaps they proceed from the soul itself, which, in the midst of its most glowing triumphs, remembers its inherent weakness; beholds itself a mere spark, glimmering like the tiny glow-worm, amidst the Infinite; and liable to be trodden into dust by the foot of Almighty Power. Or, perhaps, they fall from the earthly objects we almost unconsciously choose as suns and stars, to light us on our pilgrimage, instead of deriving all our light from God. But no sooner do we look for light, than, lo! the shadows come,—merciful shadows, if we understood their meaning. They teach us our creature suns are opaques. They bid us fly from them to Him who liveth in light,—who is LIGHT, whose presence casts no shadow on a trustful mind, and who

crieth to us from afar, *Be of good cheer!*

To fly from a despondent spirit into the light becomes, therefore, a first duty. To yield to it is the death of happiness and usefulness. A life of darkness is wretchedness. And who, with despondency preying like a ghoul upon his spirit, can achieve any great result in life? No man; for melancholy robs the mind of strength. It is as rottenness to the bones; it is a mental *marasmus*, under whose influence the noblest powers will pine away into desuetude and desiccation.

There was once an eccentric instructor of youth, who, instead of following the ancient and approved fashion of beating knowledge into unwilling skulls with a rod, was accustomed to help a perplexed scholar through a crooked problem by a word of explanation, and by urging him to a successful effort with the exclamation, "NEVER DESPAIR!"

This "Never despair" became the battle-

cry of his school, and the source of many an algebraic victory. How much more should the "Be of good cheer" of the blessed Christ become thy battle-cry, O Christian, and thy charm against despondency in the great strifes of life! It possesses a mystic force, beyond all the amulets of oriental fame. "BE OF GOOD CHEER!" "NEVER DESPAIR!" How cheerfully it echoes along the chambers of the soul! What a call to its sinking energies! How it silences the silly prattle of fear! How it revives the silent, drooping heart of hope! *Never* despair? No, *never!* Be of good cheer ALWAYS? Yes, ALWAYS!

"What, not when one has failed, as I have done, after ten thousand efforts, to rise into spiritual triumph? What *can* I do but despair?" Is this your inquiry, discouraged disciple? Do? You can TRUST! As when one is fainting, he falls helpless into the open arms of a friend, so you, in your perfect weakness, can leave all

other aids alone, and sink in self-despair into Christ's bosom. "But he will let me utterly fall!" Hush! dear reader. That saying is an insult to Christ. It exposes a conviction, on your part, that Christ can be guilty of falsehood and lying. Forbear that doubt, therefore! You CAN sink into Christ and rise to spiritual life and victory; therefore, "Be of good cheer!"

"But what can I do but despair?" exclaims a mercantile reader. "I have failed in business; I have thereby undeservedly lost the confidence of my brethren. I am poor now, and I see no ground for hope." Tush, man! Never despair. Great powers lie slumbering in your soul. They only wait your summons. Rise, therefore, in the majesty of an unconquered will. Be superior to your misfortunes. Assert the supremacy of mind over circumstances. Begin life anew. Assault you obstacles with sturdy blows, and look well to Him who says, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and

he shall bring it to pass." Be of good cheer!

But I hear another voice. It comes from the delicate invalid — the exhausted mother. "I have nothing to hope for," is her language; "my health is gone; my hopes crushed. Motion is toil to me, and existence pain. Darkness is in my soul, and I am weary of life, and yet I dare not die. Must I not despair?"

No, child of affliction, no! Even you must hope. Never despair! Jesus loves you. That thought is a cheerful ray of light, in which you may rejoice, at least a little. True, you are a physical sufferer — perhaps you always will be — yet

"Look yonder at that cloud, which, through the sky
Sailing long, doth cross in her career
The rolling moon. I watched it as it came,
And deemed the dark opaque would blot her beams;
But, melting like a wreath of snow, it hangs
In folds of wavy silver round, and clothes
The orb with richer beauties than her own;
Then passing, leaves her in light serene."

Do you understand the poet, lady? As that cloud clothes the moon in richer beauty, so shall your afflictions, patiently borne, robe your suffering spirit in lustres, which will make it all the more precious to its Redeemer forever—yes, FOREVER!

Can you not then endure a *little* hour of suffering for an eternity of increased bliss? Ay, you can! Then let hope sing its songs once more in your soul, and whatever may be your pangs, bear them, gazing most lovingly in the face of Jesus, and saying, "Lord, I will never despair."

Thus applied, this motto has force to keep the mind from falling into confirmed melancholy; and to lead it to the height of its power to achieve great and good things. For, while despondency unmans it, a hopeful spirit, by creating a consciousness of power, sets all its faculties into vigorous motion. Thus, the artist Correggio, when young, saw a painting by Raphael. Long and ardently did the thoughtful boy gaze on that picture. His

soul drank in its beauty, as flowers drink moisture from the mist. It waked to the consciousness of artistic power. Burning with the enthusiasm of enkindled genius, the blood rushing to his brow, and fire flashing from his eyes, he cried out, "I also am a painter!"

That conviction carried him through his initial studies, it blended the colors on his palette; it guided his pencil; it shone on his canvas, until the glorious Titian, on witnessing his productions, exclaimed: "Were I not Titian, I would wish to be Correggio."

Thus by refusing to despair of success, and by a summons to his powers, Correggio drew them forth and triumphed.

And it must be so with thee, O Christian, if you ever attain to happiness, holiness, and usefulness. "Be of good cheer," must be your watchword in every strife. If you are borne down to-day, by force or guile, you must shout your battle-cry, and resume the contest to-morrow. If the

whelming waves overflow you, and you sink in deep waters, you must gather fresh strength from the mysterious depths of your soul, and from God; and once more mount the surface and rejoice. However oppressed, hindered, crushed, tried, walled in, or tempted, still let your eye be fixed on God, and your cry be heard echoing above all your foes, "I will be of good cheer." Do this, and you are sure to win some spoils, and to attain the glorious goal toward which you run.

"Onward, Christian, though the region
Where thou art be drear and lone;
God hath set a guardian legion
Very near thee,—press thou on!"

5. A Lesson of Duty with respect to Christ's Church.

"Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

EXCEEDINGLY beautiful and exquisitely touching is this prayer of Jesus for the unity of his disciples. He desired that their union should be spiritual, genuine, visible, and enduring. He wished this, that the grace of God might be glorified in the production of a brotherhood or church dissimilar from all other communities, that the world might be benefited by beholding it, and that his disciples might, thereby, be mutually helped to maintain their fidelity. How, then, can any follower of Jesus, with this prayer of his Master ringing in his ears, either abstain from, or despise, a connection with the visible church?

The Scotch poet, Allan Ramsay, in his celebrated pastoral drama, the "Gentle Shepherd," finds a beautiful illustration

of marriage in two aged elms growing side by side. He supposes them to have been, "some years since," as bridegroom and bride. Each year they have pressed nearer and nearer to each other, until their [illegible] ing branches have mingled; and, [illegible] sings, in old Scottish phrase,

> "This shields the other fra the eastlin' blast,
> That in return defends it fra the west."

Had they stood apart and alone, each must have borne the violence of every wind, and bowed unsheltered before every storm.

This delightful image is as illustrative of the benefit of church-fellowship, as it is of the advantages of married life. For church-membership brings kindred minds into relations of mutual sympathy and protection. It tends to develop the graces, sympathies of regenerated humanity, to create the purest friendships; to secure mutual benefits. The wisdom of one member instructs the folly of the other; the strong faith of another becomes an encour-

agement to his doubting companion; the long experience of the aged is fruitful of suggestions to guide the unwary convert through the intricate labyrinths of Satan; the sturdy vigor of the young acts [illegible] on the growing feebleness of the [illegible]. The firmness of the resolute restrains the halting and unstable; and the [illegible] of the bold stimulates the timid. Thus each derives benefit from all, and all are helped by each.

What man, knowing himself, would forego the advantages of such a relation as this? What a proclamation of self-conceit or ignorance it is, for a man to despise it, and to take a position of isolation and independence! For he who does so must be either ignorant of the benefits of a church-relation, or else overcharged with inflated notions of his own strength. Better for such persons, if, studying themselves, their duty, and their advantages, they would join themselves to Christ's visible body,

and rejoice in the blessings of church-fellowship.

Go, then, fellow-Christian, join thyself with the Master's followers in some branch of the visible church! If already thou art thus united to his visible body, see [illegible] that you honor it by an unspotted life [illegible] charity; by benevolence; by fidelity to all its interests; and by cherishing pure fellowship for all who bear the image of its divine head, in any degree!

"Saviour, if of Zion's city
I, through grace, a member am,
Let the world deride or pity,
I will glory in thy name:
Fading is the worldling's pleasure,
All his boasted pomp and show—
Solid joys and lasting treasure
None but Zion's children know."

6. A Lesson of Courage for the hour of Fierce Conflict.

"Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

THERE is a touching fact related in history of a Highland chief, of the noble house of McGregor, who fell wounded by two balls at the battle of Preston Pans. Seeing their chief fall, the clan wavered, and gave the enemy an advantage. The old chieftain, beholding this effect of his disaster, raised himself up on his elbow, while the blood gushed in streams from his wounds, and cried aloud:

"I am not dead, my children; I am looking at you to see you do your duty."

These words revived the sinking courage of his brave Highlanders. There was a charm in the fact that they still fought under the eye of their chief. It roused them to put forth their mightiest energies, and they did all that human strength could

do to stem and turn the dreadful tide of battle.

And is there not a more powerful charm to thee, O Christian, in the fact, that you contend in the battle-field of life under the eye of your Saviour? Wherever you are, however you are oppressed by foes, however exhausted by the stern strife with evil, the eye of Christ is fixed most lovingly upon thee. Nor is Jesus the only observer of your conduct. You are also a "spectacle unto angels." You are "compassed about by a cloud of witnesses." Human and angelic minds, animated, the good by love, and the evil by hate, are the spectators of your deeds. Thus is the theatre of your life made sublime; and you contend for salvation under circumstances sufficiently grand, and with results before you sufficiently awful, to arouse your most latent powers, and to stimulate you to strive bravely, vigorously, and perseveringly, even unto victory.

But the good man is apt to forget that

he is thus observed. The terrestrial and visible exclude the celestial and invisible. Ceasing to walk by faith, he loses sight of the innumerable witnesses, who surround him. Then he magnifies his difficulties; forgets the sources of his strength; his confidence grows weak; his strength diminishes; his resistance becomes less stern and resolute; his foes take the advantage; they renew their efforts; fiery darts fall upon and wound him; discouragement seizes upon him; and the danger of a complete and disastrous defeat grows imminent.

In such a critical moment as this the Christian needs to be reminded that his Master and Saviour "ever liveth" and ever looks upon him. Through every cloud of blackness that eye, which closed in the agony of death for him, pierces to watch for his welfare. Above all the noise of battle and the roar of human voices, His word is heard saying, "I am with you, my disciple. I am looking at you, to see you do your duty." Listening to that voice,

gazing on that eye, how can any true disciple fail of being inspirited anew, and roused afresh to contend with irresistible energy for the victory?

Reader, are you discouraged? Is your heart sad? Is it oppressed and grieved? Do you walk in darkness, seeing no light? Are your enemies getting the advantage? Have you come to a stand, leaning on your sword, in the midst of the battle? If so, look up a moment, *this* moment, to Jesus your Saviour. Behold him — the man who wept with the sisters of Bethany at their brother's grave — the man who lived, suffered, died, arose for *you* — the God-man, who loveth you — see! *his* eyes are fixed upon you, full of compassionate interest! Hearken! his voice — how gentle its tones, — addresses *you*. "Come unto me, weary and heavy-laden one," it says, "and I will give *you* REST." Is not this enough? Can you despond, with *that* eye upon you, and *that* voice speaking to you? No, you cannot. Away, then, with doubt, and fear,

and sorrow. Rejoice in Christ, and go cheerfully to the remaining strifes of life. As the eye and voice of the dying warrior cheered his clan to battle, so let the eye and voice of your living and mighty Redeemer, and the presence of a cloud of august witnesses, cheer you; until you are permitted to stand on the edge of your grave, and to adopt the sublime strain of the apostle, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day."

"Out of the depths of woe,
To thee, O Lord, I cry;
Darkness surrounds me, but I know
That thou art ever nigh."

7. A Lesson of Patience for such as are wounded by sharp arrows from "False Tongues."

"It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household?"

During the war of the revolution Trumbull, the artist, visited London to study his profession under West. The American loyalists charged him with high treason. He was thrown into prison. Several celebrated Englishmen, who were his friends, appealed to the king of England. But he, though desirous to aid him, dared not interfere with the course of the law. Nevertheless, he sent him this message: "Pledge him," said he, "my royal word, that in the worst possible event of the law, his life is safe"! Reposing on this assurance, Trumbull patiently awaited the result of his trial, and finally escaped from his enemies unharmed.

Now it often occurs that the Christian,

like this artist, is falsely charged with offences his soul disdains to commit. As a cloud sailing before a star conceals its beauty and obstructs its light, so does the vapor of the slander cast a shadow over the purity of his character. [illegible] shall he faint, therefore? Shall he [illegible] in hopeless bitterness and [illegible] by indulging painful forebod[illegible] Nay! he should not; for has he not, like the artist, a pledge of safety? Has not the King of kings, the true God, promised to secure him unharmed in the end, if he abide faithful? Has he not said to him, "there shall not a hair of your head perish"? Let him, then, endure the pain caused by the poisoned arrows of his enemies with fearless fortitude and forbearing courage!

That he may do this, let him remember that to be misunderstood and misrepresented is the proper heritage of an active Christian. His master was misnamed Beelzebub, and he should not expect better treatment. Indeed, the hatred of the world forms

one essential portion of the cross of Christ, the taking up of which is a condition of discipleship. Every disciple should, therefore, receive his meed of worldly asperity with uncomplaining dignity and meek submission. And the more so, because he cannot be really injured by his enemies. God is his shield. Jehovah is watching over his interests. He needs only to pursue the line of duty with steadfastness, and he is infallibly safe. He can neither be put down nor destroyed. Vindictive and even false tongues may assail him; but he can afford to be calm and indifferent, for he cannot be misrepresented to his best friend, who seeth all things for Himself, and who is able to put his foes to shameful silence. The light of a single torch will silence the voices of many frogs when they croak at night. Thus "truth silences the liar," and God will shed the light of truth on the character of his friends in due time.

Art thou being scandalized, Christian reader? Be calm, for thou art safe! Be

silent, God is thy defender! Say with the poet,

"O God, if I must thus afflicted be,
To suit some wise design,
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear, and not repine."

8. A Lesson of Faithfulness to Christ under all Circumstances.

"He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

JOHN MILTON, the chief of poets, held the post of Latin Secretary under Cromwell. At the restoration, he was of course dismissed from his office. He was now poor and blind, and to these afflictions Charles II. added political persecutions; he fined him, and doomed his writings on liberty to be publicly burned. Nothing daunted by these fierce and multiplied trials, the great poet retired to private life, evoked his mighty genius, and produced

"Paradise Lost!" But after he had endured the ills of poverty several years, Charles, feeling the need of his matchless talents, invited him to resume his former post, with all its honors, emoluments, and court favors. But Milton knew that the price of this honor must be silence on the great question of human liberty. Therefore he did not hesitate a moment. It was a strong temptation — the bribe was splendid. By merely keeping silence, he could have honor, abundance, and high position, in exchange for poverty, persecution, and neglect! But this could not be. The poet loved truth too well; his soul was too noble, too sincere, too firm in its allegiance to God and liberty, to barter away its right to condemn tyranny for place or gold. Hence, he spurned the royal offer, clung to his principles and his poverty, until death called his free soul to enter its congenial heaven. And so gentle was the summons — so sweetly calm was his unruffled spirit in the hour of dissolution,

that his friends knew not the precise moment of his death.

How sublimely beautiful the grand old poet stands out before the mind in this fact! Harassed, tried, aged, and blind; having the power to turn the enmity of a royal despotism into favor, by simply refraining to speak and write on the liberties of mankind, he grows majestic in his poverty, as he nobly spurns the bribe in obedience to the voice of duty. For the truth's sake he holds fast to poverty and obscurity. To maintain the right of free speech, he sacrifices himself, and defies the power of the king. Noble Milton! As the author of Paradise Lost, seated in his study, surrounded by the sublime creations of his genius, he wears an aspect of sublimity; but in that act of fidelity to God and liberty, his attitude is far more grand, sublime and beautiful. As the first of poets, he shines resplendent with intellectual lustre; as the scorner of the royal bribe, he exhibits the *moral* grandeur of

a faithful man — he fills our ideal of the man of faith, standing defiant and unawed amid the dashing waves of human power, because upheld by an immovable trust, and by an unconquerable allegiance to the invisible God. Well did the ancient heathen exclaim of a good man, in similar circumstances: "See a sight worthy of God!"

Now, beloved Christian, while you admire the moral majesty of Milton, you should toil to acquire a corresponding faithfulness to truth and duty. It is true, you may never be brought, like him, into a strait where the choice between duty and present interest will have to be so distinctly and positively made. But, by a thousand little things, your fidelity is daily subjected to strong tests. It is by proving true in these, you must prepare yourself to stand firm in a great exigency. And by the measure of your faithfulness in little things, you may pass a safe judgment on your ability to abide a fiery trial. If selfish policy,

if self-interest and self-seeking are the determining motives of your actions in your ordinary intercourse with mankind — if you are ready to take advantage of the ignorance or necessities of men in matters of business — if envy, revenge, wounded vanity, or any other low motive, has a dominant influence over your conduct, you may be assured that in a severe test of integrity, like that of Milton's, you would prove false to truth and duty. You would kneel at the feet of power, and meekly kiss its sceptre for the sake of its smiles and rewards. Such, at least, is the judgment of Christ, who asserts, that "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much." To become morally great, therefore, in peculiar exigences, you must habitually cultivate the elements of that greatness in the hourly occasions of life. Then, if it be your lot to confront great dangers, you will be prepared to stand true, firm, faith-

ful, and to give occasion to the exclamation, "See a sight worthy of God!"

Who is the honest man? —
He that doth still, and strongly, good pursue;
To God, his neighbor, and himself, most true;
Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpin, or wrench from giving all their due.

9. A Lesson of Peace under Peculiar Trials.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation. — And ye now therefore have sorrow, but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. — Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me."

To remain submissive, serene, and even joyful, under the pressure of extraordinary and protracted trials, is, perhaps, the most difficult attainment of the Christian life. It is so natural to judge of the faithfulness and love of God by the number and degree of favorable providences granted to us, that we imperceptibly slide into a habit of doubting Him when our troubles multiply. And when once unbelief becomes operative, it soon begets a sad progeny of rebellious

reasonings, of fretful repinings, and of guilty fears. Hence, perfect submission to the will of God, in seasons of peculiar adversity, is a rare grace among the children of God. Few live in the spirit of the saintly but ascetic Gregory Lopez, who, for several years in straits, and difficulties, and self-denials, continually cried, either mentally or vocally, "Thy will be done!"

This absence of entire submission to God in trouble, should be mourned over as soon as detected. It should also be contended against, with the whole might of the soul, and with the utmost energy of faith. Its presence is offensive to God, and injurious to him who indulges it. To indulge it is to be miserable, and to add a hundred-fold to the weight of our sorrow. It is also a wrong done to the Saviour; it impeaches his wisdom or faithfulness, by implying that he is not doing what is really best for us, notwithstanding his promises of protection and love. But for this implication,

there would be no complaint. For who *could* complain or rebel under circumstances, however painful, which he felt confident were the ones fitted, above all others, to secure and promote his highest good? With such a trust, though the flesh might shrink, the mind would cheerfully resign itself to suffer; supporting itself, meanwhile, by the inspirations of hope — by the bright openings in its future prospects.

And that all things do work together for his good, the Christian has the most positive assurance. The word of God has made that fact an absolute certainty. To acquire a submissive spirit, the disciple must work this fact into his mind by frequent meditations, by habitual self-training, and by carefully observing the manifold uses and purposes of trial.

Unusual trials do not necessarily express divine displeasure against the sufferer. They have other — and sometimes occult — uses, besides being *corrective*. They

test and thus strengthen, the graces; they wean the heart from earthly affections; they exhibit the power of faith to the gaze of mankind, and they prepare for the sufferer a more radiant crown — a higher joy in the eternal world. True, the specific use of many trials is concealed, and cannot be discerned by the sufferer. But all such cases must be viewed in their relation to God's immutable promise. Then, and then only, will the suffering soul hear the voice of love whispering, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice." "My grace is sufficient for thee." This will satisfy it; until Jesus lifts the veil of mystery and explains all the plans of God.

It is recorded in history that a beautiful maiden, named Blanche, the serf of an ancient nobleman, was wooed by her master's son. Not admiring his character, she scorned his suit. Upon this his coarse love turned to bitter hatred. Just then, a precious string of pearls, confided to the maiden's care, was lost. Her pseudo

lover charged her with the theft, and, in accordance with the customs of that rude age, she was doomed to die. On the day of the execution, as the innocent girl knelt to offer her dying prayer, a flash of lightning struck a statue of justice, which adorned the market-place, to the dust. From a scattered bird's nest, built in a crevice of the image, dropped the lost pearls! thus declaring her innocence. In a moment the exultant crowd rushed to the scaffold, demanding her release. There she knelt beside the block, pale, and beautiful, and with a smile of peace upon her lips. They spoke; she answered not! They touched her; she was dead! To preserve her memory, they raised a statue there; and to this day, when men gaze upon her image, they condemn her oppressor, they praise her for the purity of her character, they recognize the justice of Him whose lightnings testified to her innocence.

Here, then, we have an example of a

mystic providence. Painfully that maiden suffered for causes beyond her control. But her sorrows, by leading to a perpetual abhorrence of oppression, and admiration of virtuous innocence, have done good to thousands. If, then, that sufferer's piety be rewarded in eternity, with honor and praise, she will not only not complain, but will be everlastingly grateful for the privilege of being called to the bitter trial, so blessed to herself and others. Afflicted reader! will you apply this fact to yourself? Fail not to reflect, as you tread the burning pavement of your thrice-heated furnace, that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, *though it be tried with fire*, might be found (i. e., if properly maintained) unto praise and honor, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ." Beloved child of sorrow! is not this enough? Therefore, let not your heart be troubled!

"O! thou, who mourn'st on thy way,
With longings for the close of day,

[illegible] walks with thee, that angel kind,
[illegible]ently whispers, — 'Be resigned!'
Bear up, bear on, the end shall tell
The dear Lord ordereth all things well!"

10. A Lesson of Faith for the Hour of Temptation.

"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

When the eagle of the Alps would destroy the timid but fleet-footed chamois, he resorts to a curious device. He makes feigned attacks, darting down toward his prey, as if to seize it. The frightened chamois flies from its assailant, to its accustomed place of refuge from the hunter — to some jutting crag on the edge of a precipice. To so dizzy a spot no mountaineer, however bold, dare venture; and the hunted animal has often found safety there. But the same spot, which protects it from man, is fatal when the eagle is its pursuer. For the cunning bird

comes swooping down, in the might of his strength, and with his huge wings beats it over the crag into the fearful gorge beneath. Dashed to pieces by its fall, it becomes food to its foe, which, swiftly pouncing upon its remains, bears them in his talons to his eyrie in the tops of the rocks.

Satan has a similar device for the destruction of believers. He knows that he can do nothing but annoy them, so long as they receive his assaults at Calvary, in full view of a bleeding Christ. Hence, like the eagle, he drives them, if possible, to "Mount Sinai." He darts upon them with accusations of *legal* imperfection. He thrusts the law before them, and calls them to judge their lives and tempers by its stern demands, and by its far-reaching claims on the obedience even of the thoughts and purposes of the heart. By these means he moves the unwary disciple toward Horeb and Sinai; where, beholding nothing but the law, with its merciless

terrors, hearing only voices of thunder and wrath, he sinks condemned and sorrowful to the dust. Shame covers his face; strength departs from him; and he readily falls a victim to some new device of his malicious adversary.

Knowing this, the believer, when tempted, should obstinately refuse to judge of himself, or of his safety, by a legal standard. He should meet every accusation of Satan by immediately flying to Christ in an act of resolute faith. Every discovery of legal deficiency, of spiritual pollution, or even of actual guilt, should be followed by deep contrition of spirit, by confession, by an act of appropriating faith. By a steadfast presentation of Christ's promise he should say, "Lord, thou hast said 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead yet shall he live.' I believe, O let *me* live!" However sore the temptation, however violent the assault, however fierce the attack, he must never allow himself to lose sight of Christ as *his* present Saviour. His victory

depends on this. He must fight the battle at Calvary, or be defeated. But, contending there, defeat is impossible. Faith will spring up, and grow mighty, irresistible, and victorious in any heart, however tempted, that steadfastly persists in "looking unto Jesus." Failing of this, allowing himself to be driven to Sinai, like the chamois to the crag, he will be overcome, perhaps destroyed.

Go, therefore, tempted Christian, to Calvary. Your heart feels cold and hard; your soul is dark; you find it difficult to drag yourself to the act of prayer; and you seem forsaken of God; but, notwithstanding all this, you MUST fly to Christ, and claim Him as your present Saviour. Lie, just as you are, tossed, distracted, buffeted, at Christ's feet, with a prayer on your lips, his promise in your hand, and with your eye steadfastly gazing on his face, and your heart believing that for his own sake alone he does now accept and justify you. Do this, remain in this atti-

tude patiently, stopping your ears against all the foul whispers of your foe, and, in a little while, a sweet persuasion of his love, a delicious outgushing of affection, will spring up, fresh as living water from the everlasting hills, in your spirit. The life of holy love, which gushes from the trusting heart, as waters from the smitten rock, will pour in renovating tides through your comforted soul. Waves of joy will swell your happy bosom, and your disappointed enemy will draw back, leaving you to undisturbed fellowship with your approving Saviour. And in all Satan's future endeavors to destroy you, meet him in the same manner, according to the apostle, who, speaking of the Tempter, says, "WHOM RESIST, STEADFAST IN THE FAITH," and in obedience to Christ, who says, "HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE; AND WHOSOEVER LIVETH AND BELIEVETH IN ME SHALL NEVER DIE."

Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian as he sings;
It is the Lord, who rises
With healing in his wings:
When comforts are declining,
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining
To cheer it after rain. — *Cowper.*

11. A Lesson of Love for such as have Enemies.

"I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you."

Beneath a wide-spreading tree, which grew on a gentle slope of the Alps, a little group of Waldensian worshippers knelt on the smooth greensward in humble prayer. Earnestly, and with deep emotion, they sent their supplications to the eternal throne. Then, rising to their feet, they sung a holy song of praise; while their heaving breasts, streaming eyes and deep,

toned voices, proclaimed both the fervor and sincerity of their piety.

The echoes of these strains of song had scarcely ceased, before a small, wayworn band of men, staffs in hand, weary and pale with climbing the lofty hills, approached the worshippers. Leaning on his staff, one of them addressed the Waldensians.

"We are Catholics," said he; "our fathers persecuted your fathers, and shed their blood. For many ages they hunted you like beasts. But we are come to learn your religion. Will you instruct us?"

On hearing these words, the Waldensians wept for joy, at the opportunity of repaying love for hatred, which the occasion afforded. Without a word of reproach, or a look of anger, they welcomed the Catholic strangers as brethren, and spoke to them of the pure doctrines of Christ.

What a delightful spectacle this scene presents! How worthy of the pencil of a Raphael or Michael Angelo! How glo-

riously it exhibits the divine charity which Jesus commands his disciples to cherish! Ages of cruel wrong had the ancestors of these Catholics heaped on the heads of the suffering Waldensian church. Yet, with a sublime forgetfulness of the past, these holy men — representatives of that martyr church — opened their hands and hearts to the children of their enemies, and rejoicing led them to Christ. This is love! the love of Christ. This is returning blessing for cursing; good for evil; prayer for persecution. This is the triumph of grace over nature — the charity which is better than faith.

It is by such love as this, exhibited in the life of the individual believer, that Christianity [illegible] to achieve its highest triumph. When Christians generally shall convince the world of their sincerity, by sublime [illegible]votion to the principles of the gospel, then the followers of Christ grow unselfish, benevolent, gentle, forbearing, forgiving, and unceasing in their

efforts to save even their worst foes — then the world will open its sealed eyes and gaze on the beauty of Christ. Love is mighty to move the human heart. Even Byron — haughty, misanthropic, and sceptical though he was — was moved to tears and tenderness, by reading a prayer, which a pious lady, an utter stranger to him, had written and secretly offered to God in his behalf. And, while his heart was softened by this prayer, he made a memorable confession. Said he:

"I date my first impressions against religion by having witnessed how little its votaries were actuated by any true feelings of Christian charity."

Here we see that Christian charity can arrest the attention, and convince even a guilty infidel of the divinity of Christianity, and that its absence can lead the mind into the crooked paths of scepticism and vice. These things being so, how vigorously should you, O Christian, cultivate it! how sedulously should you toil to obtain it

as a sacred talisman to prevent you from injuring the world; and, as a "diadem of beauty" to adorn your brow and to attract others to Christ and to salvation!

Go, therefore, to thy closet, O Christian! and, with patient self-introspection, search thy heart and see if this heavenly charity is thine. See, whether you are accustomed to breathe earnest, sincere aspirations to God for the well-being of those, who, for any cause, justly or unjustly, revile and hate thee. Summon thy words, desires and actions, into judgment. Try them by the standard of thy Master's words. Commune deeply with thy conscience, until thou art satisfied that thou knowest thy precise relation to the law of Christian love. If the result is to condemn thee, repent, and go, sin no more. Crucify every unholy passion; nail every selfish affection to the cross; trust in Christ for power to achieve a victory; until, like those noble Christians of the Alps, thou canst still the storm of rage in the breasts of thine ene-

mies, with gentle words of power; or, if their enmity is too violent to be calmed by the voices of affection, until thou canst patiently receive their persecuting spite, praying, while you suffer, for the hands which smite thee; remembering that,

"The seeds of good are everywhere
And, in the guiltiest bosom,
May, by the quickening rays of love,
Put forth their tender blossoms."

12. A Lesson of Endurance for such as feel weary of laboring for Christ.

"He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal."

When Napoleon commanded the army of Italy, and while he was achieving those brilliant victories, whose renown has filled the world, he was one day so incessantly employed arranging his troops for an approaching battle, that he tasted no food for many hours. When he was on the

point of yielding to exhaustion, a poor soldier divided his last crust with his great general. Ten years passed, and Napoleon, then at the height of his grandeur, made a triumphant tour into Belgium. One day the poor soldier, who was still in his service, stepped from the ranks at a review, and addressing the emperor, said:

"Sire, on the eve of the battle of Bassano, I shared with you my crust of bread, when you were hungry. I now ask from you bread for my father, who is worn down with age and poverty!"

The emperor, who delighted to return personal favors with generosity, immediately conferred a lieutenancy upon the soldier, and settled a pension on his aged father.

Now, if a mortal man, prompted by his own natural high-mindedness, can thus liberally reward the services of his friends, how much more surely and abundantly will Jesus, whose nature is an infinite fountain of pure love, reward such as serve him! Nor

can he, like Napoleon, forget the meanest service done for him, even by the most insignificant of his disciples. Being omnipresent, he always beholds the toil of his laborers. Being omniscient, he always remembers their labors. Being true, he cannot fail to keep his promise to pay "*wages*" to him "*that reapeth.*" Being of boundless goodness, his rewards will be proportioned, not to the intrinsic value of the service rendered, but to the riches of his own royal and glorious munificence. The poor crusts we give him, or his cause, will be repaid in crowns of gold, robes of white, and thrones of everlasting dominion. He has said it, and he will bring it to pass, "*He that reapeth receiveth wages and gathereth fruit unto life eternal!*"

What, then, is it to thee, O Christian, if now your labors are unappreciated by man, and seemingly unnoticed by thy Redeemer? As to men, let it suffice thee to seek, not their approbation, but to maintain a consciousness that, in seeking to bless them,

your aim is pure; that you may be able to say with Martin Luther to his friend Hess: "I regard it as an abundant reward of my labors to know that I live only to serve others." As to Christ, be assured, he does not overlook you, nor fail to set a true value on your endeavors. Only endure, without fainting, and in due time your "harvest home" will come, and your reward be given.

"Mighty in faith and hope, why art thou sad?
Sever the green withes, look up and be glad!
Some little good every day to achieve,
Some slighted spirit no longer to grieve."

13. A Lesson for such as love the World too fondly.

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

An astronomer, who had long idolized his favorite science, became a zealous convert to spiritual Christianity. His inti-

mate friend, knowing his extreme devotion to astronomical study, asked him, "What will you now do with your astronomy?"

His answer was worthy of a Christian philosopher. "I am now bound for Heaven," said he, "and I take the stars in my way!"

By these words the astronomer taught his friend that he had transferred his affections from the *created* to the CREATOR; that, instead of finding his highest pleasure *out of God*, he found it IN GOD; and that the true use of the visible was to assist him in his aspirations after the invisible and eternal.

And this converted astronomer was right. He exhibited the true spirit of the Christian, and the true relation of the believer to the world. For what is a Christian but a man whose life is controlled by an all-absorbing love for Christ? To Christ, the current of his being flows. To become like Christ, he taxes all his energies, and concentrates all his powers. To please

Christ in all things is his inflexible purpose. So strong is his self-devotion, he prefers any sacrifice, even the loss of his property or life, to the frown of his beloved. For him, therefore, the *world*, with its manifold allurements and diversions, has no charm sufficient to win him from his allegiance to Christ; it has ceased to be his master; he has renounced it as unworthy of being sought, as an end. As being necessary to his existence, he uses it; but always as *a means to a higher good;* never as an end. For its own sake, he has ceased to love it. Its amusements, spirit, practice, and society, he rejects, because, instead of contributing to promote his chosen affection, they tend to deaden and destroy it. He knows that to love the world is to cease from loving Christ. For, is it not written, "*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him?*" And has not his Master said, "YE CANNOT SERVE GOD AND MAMMON"?

It is obvious to reason, that these two

affections — the love of the world and the love of the Father — cannot coëxist in the same breast. Are they not too unlike, and too conflicting in their sources, workings, and tendencies, to be other than exclusive of each other? Obviously the love of Christ, originating in the work of the Spirit, fed by faith in the invisible, and ever tending upward toward the purity and glory of the eternal mind, cannot abide with that love of the world, which springs from a depraved selfishness, is nurtured by those material objects which gratify the senses and stimulate the passions, and which tends only to the visible and sensual. How, then, can a Christian, in whom the love of Christ predominates, be otherwise than dead to the world? How otherwise than without relish or desire for its amusements and diversions; without any controlling regard for its honors and emoluments?

The Christian, who would *use* the world innocently, may learn a lesson from Dame

Nature, who is always a wise instructress. She grows the odoriferous flowers, whose aroma is so grateful to the senses; but it is only when that odor is wafted to us in the casual gust of wind, that it is sure to please; for, no sooner do we pluck the *flower*, and press it too hard, or hold it too near, than, forthwith, it smells of the *stalk*, and we throw it away disappointed. It is even so with the world. Used cautiously, kept at a lawful distance from the affections, it yields innocent delight; but, if brought too near, if sought too earnestly, if loved for its own sake, it yields true pleasure no longer. It rather corrupts, and then destroys. Let the child of God seek, therefore, to understand the difference between the righteous *use* and the guilty *abuse* of earthly things.

The pious Leighton says of that professor who stands irresolute between God and the world, "It is a most unseemly and unpleasant thing, to see a man's life full of ups and downs, one step like a Christian,

and another like a worldling; it cannot choose but both pain himself and mar the edification of others."

How truly does this homely aphorism picture the injurious consequences of the worldly life of a professedly religious man! It curses its actor by blighting all his real joy, and blasting all his hopes of heaven. It curses observers, by the unfavorable impression of religion it makes on their minds. An old poet has given the same sentiment, a little stronger than Leighton:

"God and the world we worship both together,
Draw not our laws to Him, but Him to ours;
Untrue to both, so prosperous in neither,
The imperfect will brings forth but barren flowers.

"Unwise as all distracted interests be,
Strangers to God, fools in humanity;
Too good for great things, and too great for good,
While still 'I dare not' waits upon 'I would.'"

If this quaint old poet is severe, he is also correct. To be untrue to God and the world is to be "prosperous in neither." The result of perseverance in this career

must, therefore, be ruinous! It can terminate only in utter apostasy! Can a worldly spirit look steadfastly on such an end without trembling? But we beseech the reader, if he is of that class, to gaze fixedly upon the idea until his soul does shudder, for it is better to be filled with fearfulness and trembling now, than to perish hereafter; and it is by beholding the gulf towards which he is tending, that a traveller is effectually roused to a consciousness of danger. Look, then, thou worldly-minded one, and tremble. True, fear will not save you; but it may lead you to feel that sense of your guilt which must precede your return to Christ. It may induce you to look to Christ; and in that looking lies your safety. Beholding him, your dying religious affections will be re-kindled. As they revive, your love of the world will decline. Instead of being drawn, as by irresistible allurements, to worldly loves and diversions, you will rise superior to them all, exclaiming, "Whom

have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth I desire beside thee!"

Look *upward*, therefore, beloved wanderer from the paths of spirituality. Behold the invisible things revealed to faith through the promises! Thus shall you realize the truth of the sentiment of that pious writer who says, "Could we ascend sufficiently high from the earth, her Alps, Andes and Himmaleh Mountains would sink to a level, and earth appear an even sphere. Even so are the toys of time, the gifts, honors, and pleasures of earth to him, who, ascending on wings of faith, views the vast round of eternity."

"Poor, silly soul, whose hope and head lies low,
Whose flat delights on earth do creep and grow;
To whom the stars shine not so fair as eyes,
Nor solid work, as false embroideries;
Hark and beware, lest what you now do measure,
And write for sweet, prove a most sore displeasure.
O, hear betimes, lest thy relenting
May come too late!
To purchase heaven for repenting
Is no hard rate.

If souls be made of earthly mould
Let them love gold;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred fly;
For they can never be at rest
Till they regain their ancient nest.
Then, silly soul, take heed, for earthly joy
Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy."

14. A Lesson of Watchfulness for listless and unwary Disciples.

"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."

Life is a battle. The Christian contends with crafty foes, who seek his immortal ruin. He is aided, if he desire to be, by the highest wisdom, by almighty power. Still, his success is in his own keeping. He must fight earnestly, wisely, perseveringly, or he must fall. He must neither pause amid the strife, nor sink into dull forgetfulness after a victory. To do so is to be surprised and conquered; for his foe is wary and sleepless. Though foiled

and beaten back, he is still at hand, preparing some new strategy, by which to resume the warfare and win a triumph. Hence it is that the voices of Scripture sound a constant alarm in the ear of the church. They ring like the blasts of a trumpet in every ear, bidding every man, who would overcome, to watch. "What I say unto you, I say unto all, WATCH"—"WATCH and pray, lest ye enter into temptation,"—"Let us WATCH and be sober"—"WATCH thou in all things;" are its warning voices.

To watch, as every one knows, is to be vigilant, attentive, guarded, and prepared. It implies the perception of some threatening evil, which the watcher is determined to resist. To be successful, he must know somewhat of the character of the expected foe. He must understand his object, and the strategy through which he may attempt its accomplishment. Otherwise, the most intense watchfulness may be in vain, as can be seen in the following illustration.

During some of the early wars of our English ancestors with the aborigines of this country, a small detachment of soldiers, stationed near a fortress, had its sentinels posted along the margin of the forest which skirted the camp. From one of these outposts a sentinel disappeared one night, and no traces of his departure could be found. The next night, during the same watch, a second one was missing. The night following, a third was in like manner lost. By this time the post had become an object of terror to the soldiers. Accordingly, the guard was doubled, and received orders to fire on the first sign of danger. But the two sentinels also shared the mysterious fate of their comrades. The troops now showed a manifest unwillingness to mount guard on that dreaded spot at the fatal hour; and the commander called for a volunteer, appealing to the honor of his men, and to the obvious necessity of guarding every point. The troops stood mute for a few minutes.

Then, a fine-looking young man stepped forward and offered to run the fearful risk. At the appointed hour, some of his comrades bore him company, begging him to fire at the first token of danger, and wishing him farewell, with words and looks which showed they deemed him doomed to the mysterious fate of their lost companions in arms. The man, after examining the lock of his musket, commenced pacing his prescribed distance with every faculty fully awake to his danger. An hour passed, and nothing disturbed him. He grew confident. Another hour and he would be relieved. One half of that hour, too, had expired, and he was still safe. But now, through the deep gloom, he saw something moving stealthily toward him. He lowered his musket and kept his eye fastened upon the approaching object. It moved so slowly he fancied sometimes it was but a delusion of the brain. Then, again, he felt sure it did move, and was on the point of firing; but the idea of giving a false alarm re-

strained him. Presently he felt sure it was really advancing, and it seemed to him to be a black bear. He hesitated to alarm the camp for such an enemy; but, observing that it made a quickened movement, and, stimulated by a strong impulse, he fired. The seeming animal sprang upward, groaned, and lay still. All the sentinels along the line discharged their pieces, the camp was aroused, the troops came rushing to the rescue, and found the foe to be an Indian concealed in the skin of a bear! The soldier's ball had pierced his heart, and he was dead.

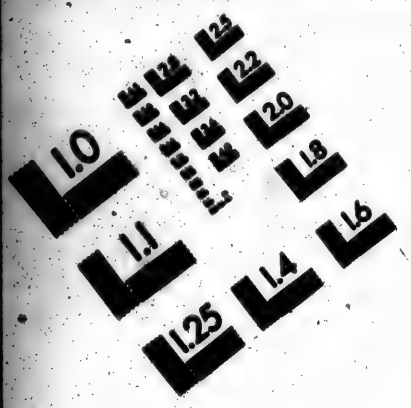
The mystery was now solved. The Indians had stolen in this guise upon the previous sentinels and strangled them. The poor men, unsuspicious of the trick, and fearing to give an alarm by firing at a bear, had permitted their wily enemies to steal toward them, until near enough to spring upon and disarm them; when they fell an easy prey. The scalped bodies of the murdered

men were afterwards found in a swamp, covered with leaves and branches.

Here, then, we have the idea of unsuccessful watchfulness illustrated. The men who perished were unquestionably intent on guarding both themselves and the camp. But, not understanding the stratagem of their crafty adversary, they knew not how to detect his approach. After it was discovered, they were prepared to defeat it, if attempted again.

So, in the spiritual life, it is essential to understand the purpose of the great adversary, and the plans by which he aims to execute it. Without such knowledge the believer is almost sure to be overcome, despite his watchfulness and care; for he cannot know what to watch, or where to expect his foe, and must therefore fight disadvantageously.

Now, the grand object of the tempter of men is to persuade believers to "cast away their confidence;" this being the only means by which he can finally destroy



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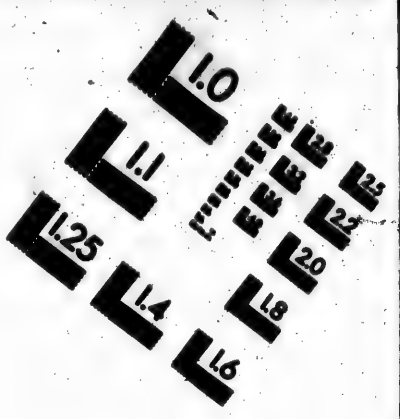

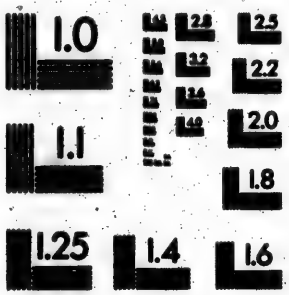

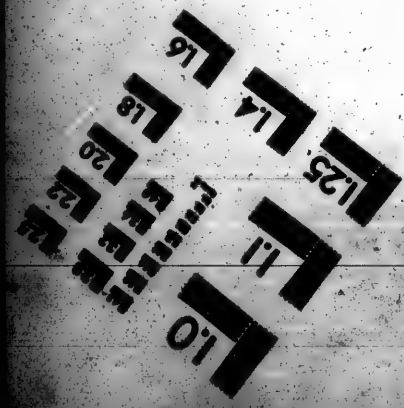

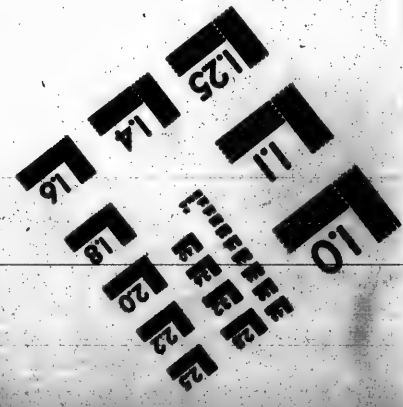

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them. Hence the stress laid by the Scriptures on the necessity of keeping the faith, and of fighting the fight of faith. Paul, summing up his Christian life, states, as its triumphal results, that he had "*kept the faith:*" To keep the faith, therefore, is the object for which the good man contends: To induce him to cast it away is the aim of Satan; because, if faith is lost, all is lost; if faith is maintained, heaven is won, the believer saved. Hence, the whole battle of salvation is fought at this point, and for these issues. The man contends for his faith; the tempter seeks to destroy it.

Knowing this, how studiously should you, O Christian disciple, watch your faith! How suspiciously should you scrutinize every fact, suggestion, influence, or solicitation which, in any way, tends to weaken your confidence in God, or to dim your vision of spiritual objects! With what keen attention and guardedness of mind should you observe the relation of your

habits of thought, of conversation, of business, or of indulgence, to the growth or diminution of your faith! For, thus to observe is to watch; and thus to watch is to be saved from surprise, and consequent defeat,—for a faith thus resolutely guarded will, in all probability, be kept,—until, standing in full view of the heavenly city, with its golden light pouring a flood of glory upon your soul, as a victorious believer you exclaim, with Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness!" Thus watching, you will learn to sing with the sacred poet, Watts:

"My cheerful soul now all the day
Sits waiting here and sings,
Looks through the ruins of her clay,
And practises her wings.

"Faith almost changes into sight,
While from afar she spies
Her fair inheritance, in light,
Above created skies."

15. A Thought for those who are passing through "much Tribulation."

"In the world ye shall have tribulation. — What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

TRENCH, in his interesting work on the use of words, exhibits the hidden beauty of the word *tribulation*. Its ordinary signification is affliction, anguish, sorrow. Men pray against it, and shrink from it as if it were a positive evil. But its meaning is calculated to calm the unrest of the tried heart. It is derived from "*tribulum*," the Roman name of the threshing instrument or roller, whereby the husbandman was wont to separate the corn from the husks; and "*tribulatio*" signified the act of separation. Tribulation, therefore, is nothing but the threshing of the inner man, whereby it is separated from the husks and chaff, which would unfit it for the garner of heaven.

What, then, are our afflictions but acts of holy and faithful love? Our heavenly Father loveth us; and because he loveth us, he takes away our precious things. He deals with us somewhat after the manner of an ancient painter with his pupil. The young artist had genius, and produced a picture of much merit, which was greatly admired by all. His young heart then swelled with vanity. He laid aside his palette and pencil, and sat daily before his easel admiring the offspring of his own genius.

One morning he found his beautiful creations expunged from the canvas. He wept bitterly. His master appeared and said, "I have done this for your benefit; the picture was ruining you."

"How so?" demanded his pupil.

"Because, in the admiration of your own talent, you were losing your love of the art itself. Take your pencil and try again."

The youth dried his tears; seized his pencil, and produced a master-piece; which,

but for this severe trial, he would in all probability have never executed.

And thus, when we are vain and haughty in our prosperity, when we worship the gift and forget the giver, when earthly affections, like husks on grain, enclose our hearts, God in pure love applies the flail of tribulation. He submits us to temporary pain that he may save us from everlasting ruin. O, this is true love indeed! and blessed are they who permit their trials to accomplish this loving purpose. They, and they only, shall gain a place among that noble multitude revealed in the glorious vision of the Revelator, of whom the elder said, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Let it, therefore, be thy care, O Christian, however dark and starless thy sky — however fierce the storm that beats around thee — however peculiar and perplexing the afflictions which try thee — to maintain

thy confidence in the love and care of thy Master. Because thou canst not solve the mystery of thy condition, deem it not inexplicable. If thou canst not reconcile thy trials with the love of thy Redeemer, dare not even to imagine that they are utterly irreconcilable. Remember that Jesus is wiser than thou art. What is darkness to thee, is light to him; what he does, *thou knowest not now;* but be patient — THOU SHALT KNOW HEREAFTER!

"In life's long sickness evermore
Our thoughts are tossing to and fro;
We change our postures o'er and o'er,
But cannot rest, nor cheat our woe.

"Were it not better to lie still,
Let him strike home, and bless the rod,
Never so safe as when our will
Yields undiscerned by all but God?"

16. A Lesson of Meekness for Irritable Disciples.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

WHOEVER has true faith is master of himself; for faith brings with it an element of self-control. Whoever has divine love in his heart is gentle and loving, meek and forbearing towards all, because brotherly love is inseparable from the love of Christ; and love is always gentle toward its objects. Religion, therefore, which is neither more nor less than faith working by love, always shows itself in self-conquest, in a victory over wrong natural temperaments. It produces good temper.

A pleasant illustration of this fact is found in the memoirs of Wesley. He had been preaching on his father's grave in Epworth churchyard. Multitudes had embraced the truth, and converts abounded on all sides, very much to the annoyance

of the obstinately wicked. Some of these sought to gratify their malignity of spirit by arresting a cartload of the new converts, whom they carried before a rare character in those intolerant times — an honest-hearted justice of the peace. No justice Shallow, with his dog-latin and pride of ancestry, was he, but a plain old English squire, with a brain well filled with common sense, and sound notions of justice. "What crime have these people committed?" very properly inquired he, as the happy-looking converts were planted before him in his fine old hall.

The would-be accusers were dumb. For their lives they could not frame a charge against those pious rustics. At length, one man answered:

"Why, sir! these people pretend to be better than other people, and they pray from morning till night!"

We fancy how, on hearing this reply, the honest justice peered through his silver-rimmed spectacles, first at the accused, and

then at the accuser, a quaint smile playing round his lips, as he asked, "Is that all they have done?"

Another spokesman now interfered. An old man with gray hairs was he. With eager words he replied, "No, sir! Please your worship, they have converted my wife! Till she went among them she had such a tongue! And now she is quiet as a lamb!"

This was too much for the equanimity of the good justice to endure. Amused, yet indignant, at the intrusion, we see him rising slowly on his great, gouty feet, — we can hardly picture a justice of those days without the gout, — he elevates his voice, and in a tone of authority cries:

"Carry them back! carry them back! and let them convert all the scolds in town."

Assuredly, the woman, whose harsh, rude spirit had become tamed to the quiet of a lamb, had learned a precious lesson in the school of Christ; a lesson, which all,

who call Jesus master, are also bound to learn both as a duty and a privilege. The command is imperious. *Take my yoke upon you!* The privilege is a high and holy one, pregnant with blessings—*Ye shall find rest!*

How is it with thee, Christian reader? Art thou meek? Is thy spirit gentle? Canst thou endure injury and insult with an unruffled mind? Art thou Christ-like in thy tempers? If not, remember, that you are your Lord's disciple only in proportion to the degree of your obedience to his precepts. Obey him, imitate him, and you are his friend. Disobey him, trample upon any one of his precepts, and you separate yourself from him. Listen, therefore, to the lesson of meekness he teaches thee—"*Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.*"

"O gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may go a trifle wrong,
To step aside is human;

One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving why they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark
How far perhaps they rue it."

17. A Lesson of Self-denial for such as seek Maturity of Christian Character.

"If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me."

THE man who does not practise self-denial is assuredly no Christian. Because, to embrace Christianity is to crucify selfish affections. In an unrenewed mind, *self* is the object of supreme regard; in a converted man, self is dethroned; and the love of Christ is the paramount affection of the soul. Unrenewed, a man acts with reference to his *own will;* but renewed, he sets his own will aside, and cries, "*Thy will be done.*" While unregenerate, he seeks his *pleasure* in self-gratification; but, when made a new creature, he seeks it

in the approbation of God. When, therefore, Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself," and again, "Whosoever doth not bear his cross cannot be my disciple," he did not merely proclaim a law of his kingdom; he asserted a fact — he made known a necessity of the Christian life. Hence, his language is very positive and unqualified; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself!" If he will not, "he CANNOT be my disciple!"

By the degree of his self-denial, a believer may measure the growth of the Christian life within himself. For, just in proportion as Christ reigns, self is crucified; just so far as the will of Christ is the law of his acts, emotions, and volitions, so far are self-will and self-pleasing set aside, and he living a Christian, or self-denying, life. Every tendency, therefore, to self-indulgence should be carefully watched; every disposition to allow one's self in little luxuries, in useless gratifications, in

former habits of sloth, in ease, in conformity to the world, should be promptly checked. Yea, they *must* be, or the life of God will grow dim and feeble in the heart.

Yet, it must not be forgotten, that "*will-worship*" is not self-denial. And what is will-worship, but the invention of modes of self-denial which Christ never commanded? What is it but the workings of a legal spirit, which seeks to recommend itself to the divine favor, through such inflictions on the flesh as unrequired penances, excessive fastings, making extravagantly long prayers, and the like? Certainly such things are will-worship, and not self-denial. For self-denial is nothing more than the healthy outworking of the life of God. It is a beautiful outgrowth of an inward affection; while will-worship is a manifestation of self, in the form of spiritual pride. The distinction is obvious, and it is worthy of the careful attention of spiritual minds.

To judge of the true character of an act

of self-denial, the believer should sit in cautious judgment on himself. He should study the motives and the aims of his conduct. *Why* do I act? *Whom* do I seek to please? are the queries he should often put to himself, when in the practice of self-denial; otherwise, he may unwittingly lose his sincerity and his faith.

So, too, he should carry on an *aggressive* war upon the selfish tendencies of his nature. He should inquire if his self-denial reaches the claims of the Christian life. Am I sufficiently *benevolent* to subdue my disposition to covetousness; to meet the claims of the church; to please the Saviour? Do I restrain my *appetites* within the bounds required by the laws of health and by the will of God? Do I mortify my *desires*, educate my *tastes*, and regulate my *habits*, so as to best promote the growth of the spiritual life? Thus should the Christian often interrogate himself, with the Bible before him; for, by neglecting to do so, he may continue to practise habits

which, though not destructive to the initial Christian life, are fatal hindrances to its full development.

There is a passage in the Rev. John Wesley's Journal, which finely illustrates this subject, and shows how very conscientiously he sought to add to his acts of self-denial; not for the mere sake of being self-denying, but, for the glory of God and the good of others. Let us listen to his statement. He says: —

"After talking largely with both the men and the women class-leaders, we agreed it would prevent great expense, as well of health, as of time and money, if the poorer people of our society could be persuaded to leave off drinking tea. We resolved ourselves to begin and set the example. I expected some difficulty in breaking off a custom of six and twenty years' standing. And, accordingly, the first three days, my head ached more or less all day long, and I was half asleep from morning to night. The third day, on Wednesday, in the after-

noon, my memory failed almost entirely. In the evening I sought my remedy in prayer. On Thursday morning my headache was gone, my memory was as strong as ever. And I have found no inconvenience, but a sensible benefit, in several respects, from that day to this."

Of the peculiar act of self-denial, named in this paragraph, we say nothing; but it brings out, very distinctly, the conscientiousness, the benevolence, the perseverance, and the self-sacrifice of the great founder of Methodism. He thought he saw an evil effect arising from the habit of tea-drinking among the poorer classes. To prevent it, he denied himself a pleasure next to harmless to himself, and which had not hitherto injured his spiritual life. He persevered in his self-denial, even to the partial temporary loss of his memory! And this for the sole purpose of being beneficial to others! Noble-minded man! Would that his spirit yet triumphed in all, who, like him, bear the name of Christian.

And let it be remembered, O disciple, that, if you are truly a Christian, you are, of necessity, self-denying to some ascertainable extent; if you are seeking growth and eminence in piety, you must also seek to know all that is demanded of you, and to perseveringly act up to every conviction of duty. Doing this, you may be sure of sharing the joy of His crown, whose cross you thus cheerfully choose to carry. Say then to the voices of sin and self, with pious George Herbert,

"Press me not to take more pleasure
In this world of sugared lies,
And to use a larger measure
Than my strict, yet welcome, size.

"First, there is no pleasure here.
Colored griefs, indeed, there are;
Blushing woes, that look as clear
As if they could beauty spare.

"Or if such deceits there be,
Such delights, I mean to say,
There are no such things to me,
Who have passed my night away."

18. Blessedness of the Spiritually-minded Christian.

"God is a spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. — Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

THESE words teach that a spiritual religion is the only religion which can be acceptable to God. They also teach, through a beautiful figure, how blessed, how refreshing, how perpetually invigorating, such a spiritual religion is. In this they agree with that other Scripture which saith that to be spiritually-minded is LIFE and PEACE. So that both Paul and Jesus teach that life and peace are sequences of a spiritual mind. If this be true, — and if life and peace are of all things the most precious to the human mind, — the question, Am I spiritually-minded? is pregnant with interest and importance.

What is a spiritual mind? It is a mind in harmony with the great spiritual truths of the gospel; a mind that feels the attraction, contemplates and explores the depths, is penetrated by the power, and seeks, with its concentrated energies, to regulate itself by the light of spiritual truth. Divine objects occupy its thoughts, create its emotions, and control its decisions. This is a spiritual mind. And every such mind enjoys a *life* unknown to other men, and a peace peculiar to the child of God. *Christ is in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

How can it be otherwise? A spiritual mind is habitually conversant with *great ideas.* It dwells in an exalted companionship with the holiest, loftiest, sublimest object of thought. It lives conscious of the all-surrounding presence of God! Everywhere, — above, beneath, around; — always — by day and night — it recognizes and welcomes the near and real presence of a personal Jehovah. Conscious of this

august presence, it adores, wonders, worships, loves! His attributes, his perfections, his works of power and mercy, are the themes of its thoughts; conformity to his will, and likeness to his moral nature, are the objects of its pursuit; and an unalloyed enjoyment of his favor in an eternal state is the image of its hope.

Viewing the question *philosophically*, how can such a mind fail of attaining a *life* unknown to mere sensuous persons? Is it not in accordance with the constitution of things, that great thoughts quicken, enlarge, and thrill the mind?

> "Who can mistake great thoughts?
> They seize upon the mind — arrest and search,
> And shake it — bow the tall soul as by wind —
> Rush over it like rivers over reeds,
> Which quaver in the current — turn us cold,
> And pale and voiceless!"

So wrote, in strong terms, the poet. And so testify the voices of experience; for every man who *thinks*, knows the luxury of that intellectual life which springs up in

exquisite freshness at the touch of a great thought. A remark of the great German scholar, Herder, affords a further, but melancholy, illustration. As he lay dying, in dreamy lassitude of spirit, he suddenly raised himself and startled his weeping watchers by crying, "Give me a great thought, that I may *quicken* myself with it!"

Here was a recognition of the power of great ideas to stimulate the inner life. But Herder's intellect, though embracing the same objects as those which stand up before an evangelical, spiritual mind, did not conceive of them in the same delightful relations; and hence he could not know their full power to call forth an internal life. Herder's thoughts were abstract truths viewed merely in their own vastness, and overwhelming his mind with emotions of the sublime and beautiful. Spiritually-minded believers behold the great and positive facts of revelation, in their merciful relation to themselves, and

to mankind. Hence, they not only feel every element of the intellectual life vivified, but their emotional and moral natures are also moved; an enlarged spiritual life, attended by peace, is the result.

This peace, which attends the life of the spiritually-minded, proceeds, not from the mere perception and contemplation of spiritual objects, but from that faith, which is both the medium through which they are discovered, and the demonstration of their reality. The perception of an infinite, self-existing God is not of itself calculated to calm the fear of a guilty creature like man, but rather to increase it. And the same may be affirmed of the discovery of a spiritual world, and of immortal existence. True, where the moral sense slumbers, the mind may derive an intellectual pleasure from the contemplation of these great truths; but it cannot derive peace from them until they are viewed through the medium of a genuine faith. A truly spiritual mind does this.

Does it see the forms of innumerable dangers, marching like a spectral army toward it, with frowning brows and weapons of terrible destruction? Then the infinite essence, in which it lives, becomes to it an impregnable tower of safety, into which it confidently retires; and from behind barriers of Omnipotence it defies its foes!

Does it fall into afflictions? Do clouds, in black and rifting masses, gather like darkness in the day of doom round its head? By faith it sees love and beauty in those forms, which to the eye of sense are big with terror;—just as in a celebrated picture of Jean Paul Richter, which is so painted that when viewed at a distance it seems surrounded with floating clouds, but when examined closely, those clouds resolve themselves into angelic faces. Thus faith, in a spiritual mind, discovers not only the harmlessness of trials, but discerns them in all the beauty of their true character, as messengers of love. Hence it endures them in undisturbed peace. Does it sur-

vey the history of its sinful life — so black with numberless offences, so shameful for its record of unfathomable ingratitude, and so deserving of unlimited punishment? Still it does not fear, for it turns confidingly toward the mediatorial throne. There by faith the spiritual man beholds, in the glorious person of that once crucified Jesus, a manifestation of the love of the infinite for himself; he sees in Christ a demonstration of a boundless desire to save him. He learns that through that mediator, love, yea, infinite love, has a channel along which it may flow, and does flow, in unobstructed fulness, even to the chief of penitent sinners. And, seeing this, he rests confidingly in that love. God loveth me, is the cry of his swelling heart, and it is followed by an inexpressible peace, which abides with him so long as, looking unto Jesus, he retains that trust in the love of God to him.

It is just here that faith becomes the demonstrator of the reality of its objects —

of the existence of a spiritual world. Men can hardly be persuaded into the dogmas of that idealistic philosophy, which teaches that the material world has no existence except in our own sensations. No! In spite of idealists, men of common sense will still believe that there is a material world, which is the cause of their sensations. They are satisfied that the change which the presence of an object produces in their minds is an evidence that the object itself exists.

And by just such proof do spiritual things demonstrate their existence through faith. The spiritual mind contemplates them as they are revealed, and is conscious of an effect — a change in itself. This change is as much a matter of consciousness as the sensations of heat or cold. It is a real change, demonstrable both to its recipient and to observers. It reaches to the whole nature, giving life, expansion, and growth to the intellectual, exquisite pleasure to the emotional, and indescri-

bable peace to the moral nature. Can demonstration go further than this? Nay! Triumphing, therefore, in this realization of invisible objects, the spiritual mind rejoices in them with a *certainty* impossible to other persons. He confirms that notable saying of his Master; "if any man will do his will, HE SHALL KNOW OF THE DOCTRINE."

How sublime is the life of such a man! How pure the atmosphere he breathes! How rich and full the current of life that flows in his soul! How great his power over the visible world! Living in the spiritual, aspiring after the divine, he values life, and time, and earth, at their true value. Life has no mirage of deceptive beauty for him, for he lives above the mists and vapors on which such false images are painted. This world has no price which can purchase his affection, for the smallest treasures of his world exceed in value the visible world itself. Sin has neither charm to please nor power

to subdue him: he has been introduced to higher, purer, richer pleasures; which spiritualize his whole nature, and thus weaken the demands of sense. Love for Christ has expelled the love of sin, and the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost is his tower of strength.

Christian reader! Are you spiritually-minded? Do you comprehend the workings of the spiritual life? Is Christ in you as a well of water? Do you worship God with a spiritual worship? If so, sacredly guard the growth of the spiritual principle within you. Beware of the early symptoms of declining vigor in your spiritual affections, and check the feeblest tendencies toward the low and sensual. Thus will your life be hid with Christ in God, and your end eternal life.

But if not, — if the carnal is strong and the spiritual weak, — rouse yourself to honest endeavor after the true life. Your first duty is to humble yourself before God; your second to act faith for pardon

and for power. Then, in steadfast looking to Christ, and patient waiting for divine manifestations, go forward from grace to grace, until in the pure depths of your renovated soul you mirror the life and peace which is the sequence of a spiritually-minded state.

"Fare ye well, dreams of night,
Jesus is mine!
Mine is a dawning bright,
Jesus is mine!
All that my soul has tried
Left but a dismal void
Jesus has satisfied,
Jesus is mine!"

19. The Ideal of a Christian Mind a Sublime Reality.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.—Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven."

"Life is thought," says Coleridge. And with truth, for no man lives in the *facts* of

the present moment, but in an ideal future. The heaven of man is not *here*, in the present, but THERE, somewhere in that ideal world painted in his thoughts, with pencils dipped in the brilliant hues of the rainbow. Hence, as another poet sings,

"Man never is, but always to be blest."

This is true, to some extent, both of worldlings and of Christians. True, the spiritual mind does live more in the present than is possible to a sensuous one; but there is so much of trial, temptation and toil, mixed with its joys, that it sighs for its future, and derives much of its pleasure from those visions of unmolested repose in heaven which are inspired by the voices of hope. Its chosen treasures are there, and it sighs to gain access to them. It has, therefore, its ideal world, as well as the unbelieving one.

But here the parallel ceases. Henceforth its lines diverge in opposite directions. There is no *comparison* to be drawn be-

tween the two ideals of these two classes of minds. They are *contrasts* in the most absolute sense.

What is the ideal of a worldly mind? It is a fiction, a spectre — a glorious spectre, but still a *spectre* — an impalpable nothing. It is like the image which is reflected by the woodman's form on the mountain mist, so beautifully described by Coleridge:

"As when
The woodman, winding westward up the glen
At wintry dawn, where o'er the sheep-track's maze
The viewless snow-mist weaves a glistening haze,
Sees full before him, gliding without tread,
An image with a glory round its head;
The enamored rustic worships its fair hues,
Nor knows *he makes the glory he pursues.*"

The ideal future of the unchristian mind is like this image in the mist — the reflection of its own thought, an image of the brain, nothing more. It is never realized. How can it be? It is a fancy — a dream-land never to be trodden — an imaginary *terrestrial* paradise without any real existence.

But the ideal of a Christian mind is a reality. Its future is not a fancy, but a fact; not an image, but an entity; not a dream, but an experience to be enjoyed; not a shadow glistening in the mist, but an actual possession — a heaven filled with precious treasures — to be entered on, lived in, rejoiced over, and that forever. It springs not from the mind itself, but from the reality of future things, made known to the mind by the spirit of revelation. It is an everlasting life of unspeakable bliss — a *rest* that *remaineth* for the people of God — a substantial treasure laid up in heaven.

Which is your ideal, friendly reader? What is the character of your future? Is it the latter, or is it the former? If the former, I counsel you to reject it. Embrace the entities, — those mighty substances of the universe — God, heaven, eternity! I beg you to live in and on these, and not on dreams, fancies, images. Thus living,

you shall find a delightful life in the present, and a more perfect one hereafter.

"Through the cross comes the crown; when the cares of this life
Like giants in strength may to crush thee combine,
Never mind! never mind! after sorrow's sad strife
Shall the peace and the crown of salvation be thine."

20. A Lesson concerning Faith.

"If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. — Without me ye can do nothing."

Among some of the ancient nations, a banner peculiarly consecrated to the gods acquired such a sanctity in the popular mind as to create a belief that, so long as it remained in their hands, their armies could not be defeated, nor their nationality extinguished. Animated by this superstitious notion, they guarded it with care in time of peace, and defended it, in the field of battle, with an enthusiasm which fre-

quently wrought out a victory. They concentrated their energies beneath its folds, and chose rather to die in its shadow than to live after its capture.

What these pagans only imagined of their sacred standards is actually true of *faith*, in its relations to the safety and happiness of Christians. With a living faith in his heart, a Christian cannot be conquered or even seriously injured by any foe. For all the duties of his vocation it makes him omnipotent in action. While, if he lets it slip, he sinks from irresistible might to infantile weakness. Believing in Christ, he can do all things. Without that belief he can do nothing. So Paul felt when he triumphantly exclaimed, "I CAN DO ALL THINGS, *through Christ that strengtheneth me*;" and so Jesus taught, when he said, "*Without me* YE CAN DO NOTHING!" "ALL THINGS *are* POSSIBLE *to him that believeth!*"

Glorious things are spoken concerning faith in the Holy Scriptures. Wonderful

achievements are ascribed to it. By it weak things are said to be made mighty. Miracles have been wrought by it. It has held the laws of nature in mysterious suspension. It has invaded the grave, and wrung victories from the tyrant Death! It has even won the harder conquest of sin in the human heart, and restored to fallen man the lordship of himself. Imperious passion, furious propensity, the obstinate will, and wayward affections, have all confessed its power. Fear has ceased to agitate the breast, guilt to gnaw the conscience, and shame to tinge the cheek, in its presence. By it even depravity has let go its fearful grasp on the human spirit, and the fallen, weakened, spotted captive, man, has risen to liberty, purity, strength and honor. It has raised him from the deepest depths of degradation to the purest heights of holiness, and to a throne in heaven.

How precious, yea, how unspeakably precious, therefore, is faith! How poten-

tial in its influence! How necessary to the improvement and elevation of character!

But what is it that gives this potency to faith? Whence does it derive its wondrous power to change and elevate the human soul? Why is it that, when a guilty creature simply believes that Christ is a mediator, standing between *him* and God, his load of accumulated guilt, the result of innumerable and unspeakably flagrant offences, falls in an instant from his heart? Why is it that, when a spirit, conscious of its weakness and impurity, appropriates Christ to itself as its Saviour, by believing that his blood cleanseth from all sin, it rises at once to a sense of conscious purity, and into the possession of a power to control itself, hitherto unfelt? Is it, as some teach, the mere effect of truth acting on the faculties? Or is it because, in conjunction with the contemplation and reception of the truth, the Holy Spirit sheds a direct influence upon the mind?

The Scriptures teach the last-named doctrine. They assert, distinctly, that the Holy Spirit puts forth a direct and personal influence upon individual believers. Hence, he is said to dwell in them, to comfort them, to strengthen them, to help their infirmities, to witness their adoption, and to purify their hearts. And these are offices which we cannot conceive of his fulfilling without exerting a direct and positive influence on the mind.

Take, for illustration, the operation of faith in the forgiveness of sin. How can the mere belief of revealed truth bring that delightful sense of divine reconciliation into the heart, which is the invariable fruit of evangelical faith? The office of God's word is to produce in our minds a conformity between our ideas and the facts of the spiritual world. By it we learn the precise disposition of God toward us as sinners, and the terms on which he will admit us to favor. True, the perception of these facts is calculated to deeply impress us

with a sense of our guilt, and of the certainty of our pardon, if we submit to the terms prescribed. But those who exclude the direct influence of the Spirit from their theory forget that, owing to our natural blindness and alienation from God, we cannot be made either to contemplate or to perceive these facts without such influence. The Holy Ghost must first act on our minds, inclining us to the study of these facts, and giving them distinctness and life. And even then, however clear our view and steadfast our belief of the facts, our guilt can only be cancelled by an act of divine forgiveness, which, to be known and enjoyed, must be directly communicated to the mind, or there can be no peace.

It is also true of the processes of regeneration and sanctification, that they involve changes which cannot be accomplished except by the direct influence of a divine agent. By believing the truth we learn the fact of our impurity; we discern the

necessity of its removal; we are taught the mode by which we are to be washed; a host of motives to seek it are crowded before the mind; and every encouragement that can be desired is presented to call faith into action. More than this the truth cannot do. It cannot remove moral imbecility; it cannot create moral power. It cannot impart that indescribable consciousness of purity, that sense of fellowship with God, which accompanies the exercise of faith in the blood of sprinkling. Neither can it bestow that indefinable influence which attends the prayers and utterances of deeply spiritual minds. Hence the Scriptures ascribe the work of purification to the agency of the Holy Spirit. He is said to endue believers with POWER FROM ON HIGH — TO PURIFY THEIR HEARTS. An active, direct agency is ascribed to him. And that agency is exerted in conjunction with faith. When the mind trusts, the Holy Spirit acts. His agency, in the form of a direct influence on

the mind, is exerted; though in a manner, as Jesus himself taught, wholly incomprehensible to our minds, and altogether beyond our powers of investigation.

It is this divine influence always accompanying active, evangelical faith, which makes [illegible] element of power. The believer, beholding [illegible] weakness, flies trembling from [illegible], with an earnestness which awakens and concentrates all his energies in an act of trust in his deliverer. And in that very act he waxes strong; for Christ strengthens him. He exclaims with wonder, as his soul grows conscious of the aid it has received, "When I am weak, THEN AM I STRONG — *Verily, all things* ARE *possible* to him that believeth." He gazes on the wiles of his spiritual tempters, on the hostilities of the world, on the [illegible] of life, on the stern demands of duty; he remembers his past weaknesses, he collects every hostile image around him; and when his adversaries stand up in their most gigantic and forbidding aspect, and

roar and threaten him most fearfully, he gazes in the face of his Redeemer, and, with a full consciousness of his approval, cries, "I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me!"

Would you, O Christian, have power? Cultivate faith! and it shall be manifest to all that God is with you. Are you surrounded with difficulties, trials, enemies? Is their name legion? Are they strong, and are you weak? Steadfastly believe in Christ as your helper, and you will overcome! Are you struggling with inbred sin? with unconquered tempers and uneasy passions? Crawl to Calvary in meek submission, and believe that Christ lives to save! and you shall have victory. Faith shall be to you an element of power, and through it you shall first subdue yourself on earth, and hereafter "scale the mount of God."

"Faith, mighty faith, the promise sees,
And looks to that alone,
Laughs at impossibilities,
And cries, It shall be done!"

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big with terror ;—just as in a celebrated picture of Jean Paul Richter, which is so painted that when viewed at a distance it seems surrounded with floating clouds, but when examined closely, those clouds resolve themselves into angelic faces. Thus faith, in a spiritual mind, discovers not only the harmlessness of trials, but discerns them in all the beauty of their true character, as messengers of love. Hence it endures them in undisturbed peace. Does it sur-